

REMARKS

At the outset, Applicant appreciates the courtesy extended by the Examiner in granting an interview with the undersigned on June 4, 2004. An overview of the interview is set forth in the Interview Summary mailed on June 14, 2004.

By the present Amendment, Applicant has canceled claims 9-15, without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. As a result of this Amendment, claims 1-8 are pending in the above-captioned patent application.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; rejected claims 9-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ota et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,568,257); and allowed claims 1-8.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 1-8.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection of claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and the rejection of claims 9-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ota et al. in view of Dirksen et al. In order to expedite prosecution of the present application, however, Applicant has cancelled claims 9-11 and 15, thereby rendering the Examiner's rejection moot. Applicant has also cancelled claims 12-14, which have been withdrawn from consideration. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that all outstanding issues have been resolved, and the application is in condition for allowance.

A timely issuance of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly requested.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: July 29, 2004

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